薄花少女（ハッカ）①

三浦靖冬

IKKICOMIX

HAKKA SHOUJO

MIURA YASUTO

薄花少女 ①

三浦靖冬

CHAPTER ONE
PEPPERMINT GIRL 003

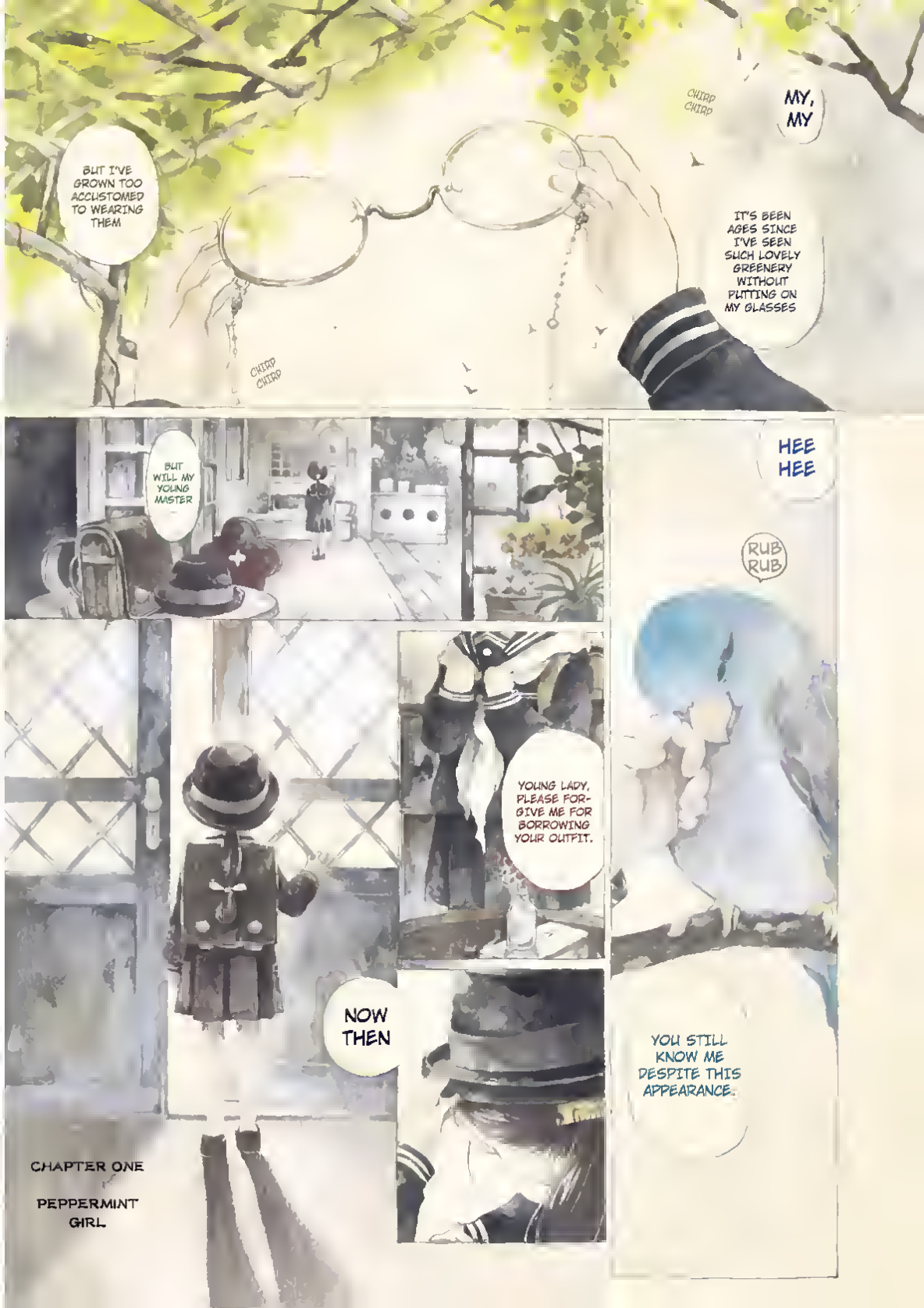
CHAPTER TWO
TAKOYAKI AND THE MOON 053

CHAPTER THREE
THE OLDER GIRL 087

CHAPTER FOUR
NATSUYAKI HATOKO'S ROOM 121

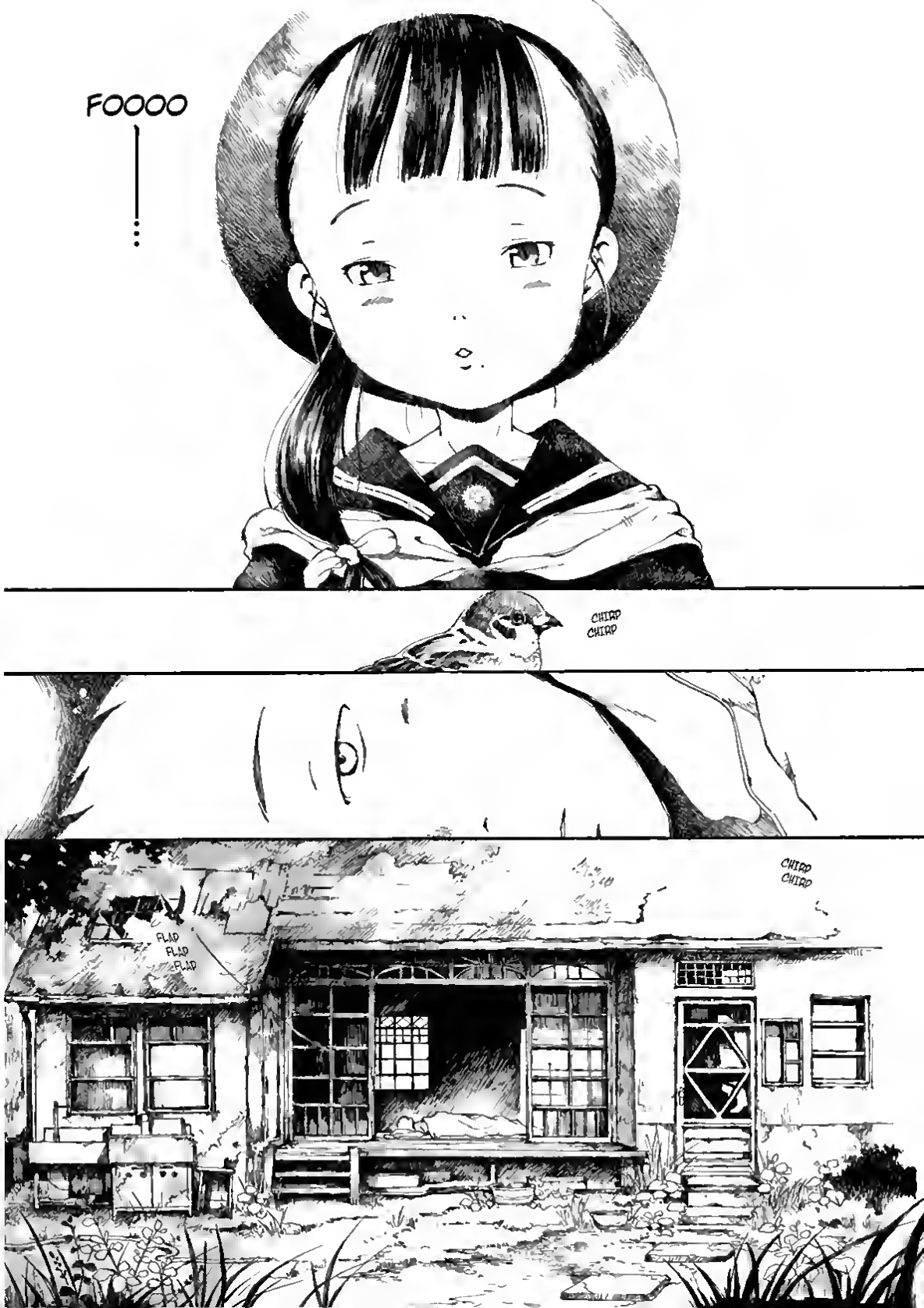
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMER CLOTHES 155

IKKI COMIX


CHIRP CHIRP
MY, MY
IT'S BEEN AGES SINCE I'VE SEEN SUCH LOVELY GREENERY WITHOUT PUTTING ON MY GLASSES
BUT I'VE GROWN TOO ACCUSTOMED TO WEARING THEM
CHIRP CHIRP
BUT WILL MY YOUNG MASTER
HEE HEE
RUB RUB
YOUNG LADY, PLEASE FORGIVE ME FOR BORROWING YOUR OUTFIT.
NOW THEN
YOU STILL KNOW ME DESPITE THIS APPEARANCE.
CHAPTER ONE
PEPPERMINT GIRL

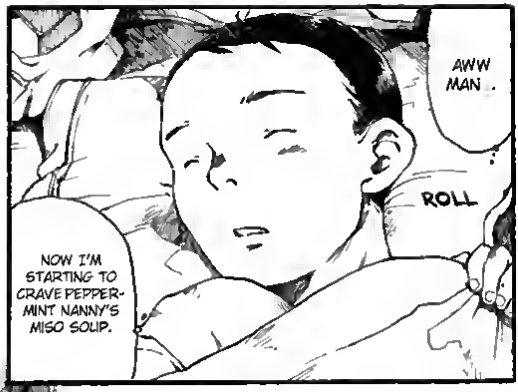
CHAPTER ONE
PEPPERMINT GIRL
I WILL BE GOING.
注意
20

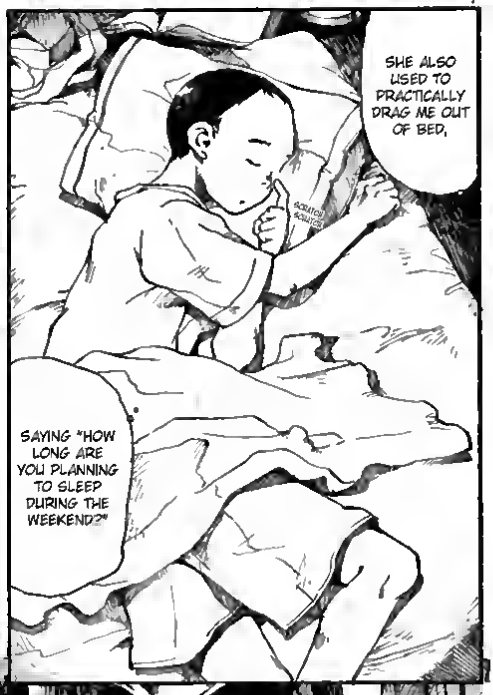
I SUPPOSE "HATOKO" WOULD BE HARD TO GET USED TO...
BUT, THAT NICKNAME YOU GAVE ME IS THE ONE I LOVE THE MOST
OH MY, YOU DIDN'T EAT ANY OF THE PEPPERMINT DROPS AGAIN?
BUT DAD WON'T BUY ME ANOTHER CAN UNLESS I FINISH THEM ALL
RATTLE RATTLE
YEAH, THEY'RE TOO SPICY
THEN IN THAT CASE, YOU SHOULD FEED THEM TO YOUR NANNY AGAIN
HERE, AHHH
NAN-NEE!
WHAT'S THE MATTER LOVE?
PEPPER-MINT NANNY -- AH!
I... I WAS SUPPOSED TO CALL YOU "HATOKO-SAN"
AH YES, THAT IS WHAT YOUR FATHER TOLD YOU
PEPPER-MINT NANNY, BLOW INTO MY NOSE
ALL RIGHT, "FOOO"
THAT SMELLS GOOD
DO IT AGAIN
OKAY, OKAY.
YOU HATE PEPPERMINT CANDY, YET YOU LIKE THE SMELL. YOU'RE A CURIOUS LITTLE FELLOW.


FOOOO
CHIRP
CHIRP
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
CHIRP
CHIRP

TICK
TOCK
ELEVEN
...
BACK TO SLEEP
FLOP
AWW... DRANK TOO MUCH LAST NIGHT.
I SWEAR, MY COWORKERS WILL KILL ME THROUGH ALCOHOL POISONING.
THANK GOD TODAY'S MY DAY OFF.
AHH... FOR A MOMENT, I THOUGHT SHE WAS SOMEWHERE OUT THERE...
BUT I WAS DREAMING.
ACTUALLY, I HAVEN'T DREAMED ABOUT THE PAST... ABOUT MY OLD HOME IN A LONG TIME.
HOPE PEPPERMINT NANNY IS DOING OKAY. DIDN'T SHE SAY SHE WANTED TO COME WITH ME WHEN I LEFT ON MY OWN?
I'M TAKING IT EASY FOR THE WHOLE DAY.
DIDN'T BRING HOME ANY WORK.
AND I DON'T EXPECT ANY VISITORS EITHER.
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP

NANNY ALWAYS COOKED MEALS FOR ME, EVEN DURING WEEKENDS
SHE'D ALWAYS MAKE RICE... MISO SOUP... THEN SOME ROAST FISH, STEWED VEGETABLES, AND A BUNCH OF OTHER STUFF...


AWW MAN..
ROLL
NOW I'M STARTING TO CRAVE PEPPERMINT NANNY'S MISO SOUP.

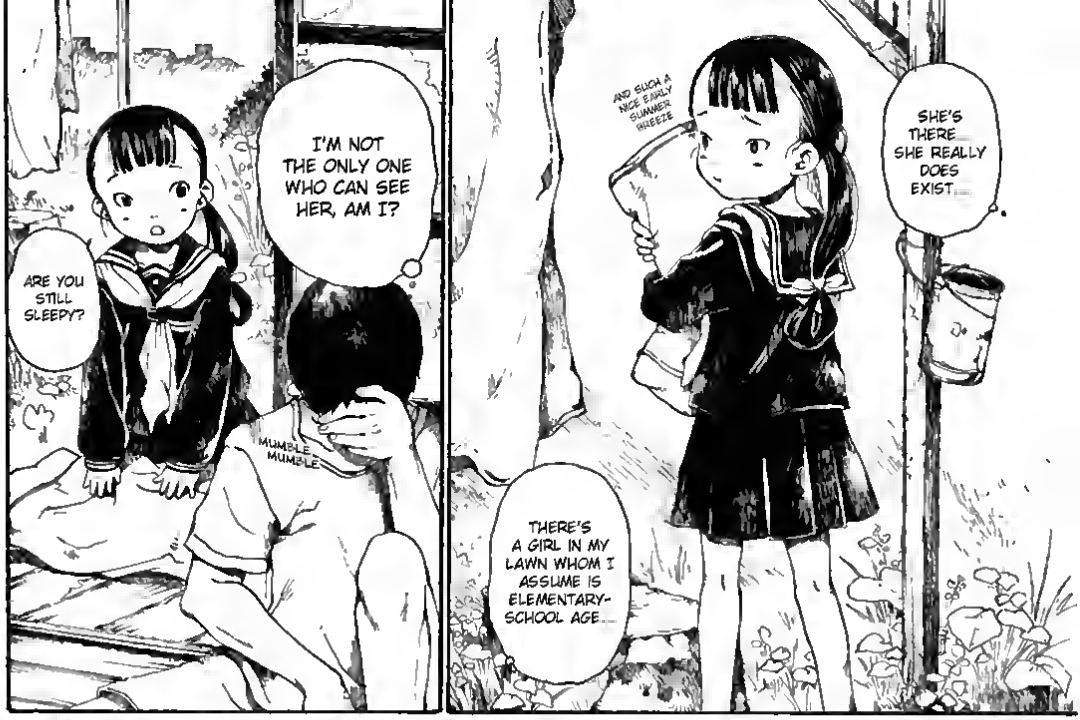

SHE ALSO USED TO PRACTICALLY DRAG ME OUT OF BED,
SAYING "HOW LONG ARE YOU PLANNING TO SLEEP DURING THE WEEKEND?"

WELL...
THAT SURE WAS A WEIRD DREAM.
THE VERY LAST PART HAD HER TURNING INTO A LITTLE GIRL WEARING A SAILOR SUIT..

TALK ABOUT BIZARRE.
YET SHE TALKED AS IF SHE WAS MY OLD NANNY.
HOW LONG ARE YOU PLANNING TO SLEEP?!

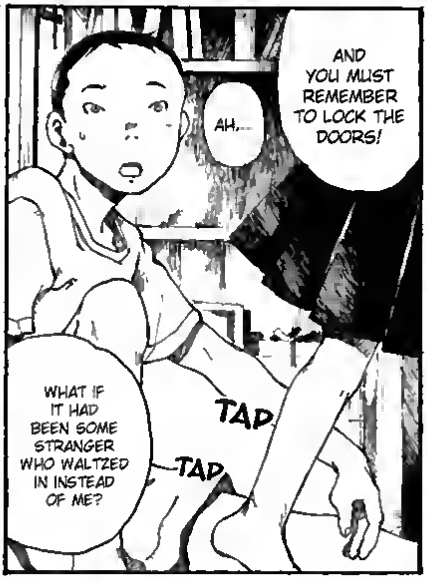
AH, YEAH...
IT'S GETTING CLOSE TO NOON!
JUST LIKE THIS...
HH...
GUESS I'M STILL DREAM-ING...
HONESTLY ...
YOU'LL LAZE AROUND ALL DAY IF NOBODY GETS YOU OUT OF BED!
FLAP

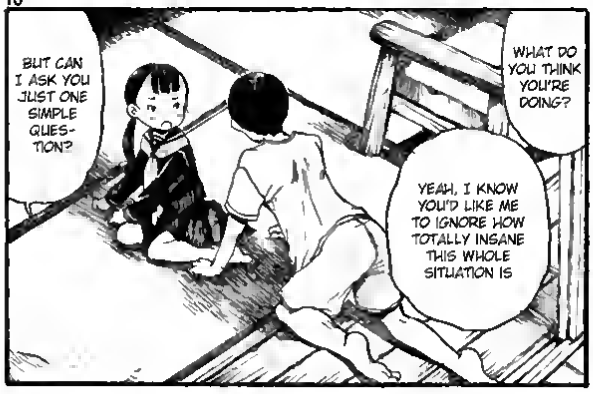
AND ON SUCH A PLEASANT DAY, NO LESS!
HONEST TO GOODNESS, YOU LITTLE IMPS WILL BE THE DEATH OF ME!
AND WHY HAVEN'T...
YOU!
DRIED OUT YOUR FUTON ..
YET?!
ONE
TWO
SPIN
THREE


I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SEE HER, AM I?
ARE YOU STILL SLEEPY?
MUMBLE MUMBLE
AND SUCH A NICE EARLY SUMMER BREEZE
SHE'S THERE... SHE REALLY DOES EXIST...
THERE'S A GIRL IN MY LAWN WHOM I ASSUME IS ELEMENTARY-SCHOOL AGE...

COME ON, WASH YOUR FACE, FIX YOUR HAIR
AND CHANGE INTO SOME PROPER CLOTHES.

GRAB
HEY, HOLD ON!
KYAH!


AND YOU MUST REMEMBER TO LOCK THE DOORS!
AH...
TAP
TAP
WHAT IF IT HAD BEEN SOME STRANGER WHO WALTZED IN INSTEAD OF ME?


BUT CAN I ASK YOU JUST ONE SIMPLE QUES-TION?
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?
YEAH, I KNOW YOU'D LIKE ME TO IGNORE HOW TOTALLY INSANE THIS WHOLE SITUATION IS

I THOUGHT I COULD GO ABOUT MY BUSINESS SINCE YOU DIDN'T BOTHER TO ASK ME.
HMMM
I MUST REALLY BE THAT STUPID
UH, NO YOU CAN'T.
WHO...
ARE YOU?
...
THAT'S RIGHT, I'M PEPPER-MINT N.
NO WAY.
THAT CAN'T BE.
HUH? N... NANNY?
WHERE?
SHE'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU.
NANNY? PEPPERMINT NANNY? NATSUYAKI HATOKO, WHO'S SUPPOSED TO BE PUSHING 80?
BUT.. THAT IS QUITE SAD TO HEAR.
HUH?
I USED TO CHANGE YOUR DIAPERS
PAT
PAT
YET YOU FORGET YOUR OWN NANNY AFTER JUST A FEW MONTHS APART?

...
NO CHIPPER? DOESN'T EVEN BEGIN TO CUT IT
I SEEM TO HAVE GOTTEN A LOT MORE CHIPPER RECENTLY THAT EVEN I'M SURPRISED.
YES, I SUP-POSE...
IT IS ONLY NATURAL FOR YOU TO DOUBT ME
RING
AH!
LOOK, I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU KNOW ABOUT MY NANNY, BUT...
YOUR PHONE IS RINGING!
SO WHAT'S MAKING YOU CALL ME FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A WHILE?
COMING, COMING... HELLO?
AH... DIDN'T EXPECT A CALL FROM YOU.
AH
IT'S FINE. I'VE ARRIVED SAFELY
SHE ONLY LEFT A NOTE?
SHE'S GONE MISSING?
SOMETHING HAPPENED AT HOME?
HUH? PEPPER-MINT . HATOKO-SAN? NO, SHE'S NOT HERE
YEAH, I KNOW SHE WANTED TO FOLLOW ME, BUT..
OH, IT'S NOTHING, JUST THE TV.
YEAH... YEAH I KNOW, SHE'S ALMOST 80 AND SHE DOESN'T HAVE ANYWHERE ELSE TO GO
OKAY, IF I HEAR ANYTHING, I'LL CALL YOU BACK. BYE.
MMFF

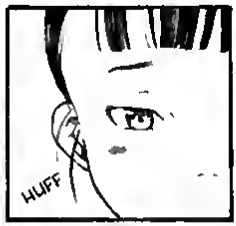
THE ONE STANDING BEFORE YOU IS REALLY NATSUYAKI HATOKO.
I AM YOUR PEPPERMINT NANNY, AND I'LL BE 80 YEARS YOUNG
FUMI, MY DEAR.
CLICK
PUAH
...
WAS THAT FROM THE KOITO RESI-DENCE?
HUH? HOW'D YOU KNOW THAT NAME?
EVERYBODY IN THAT HOUSE-HOLD MUST BE WORRIED SICK BY NOW
BUT, I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO DO THIS
FORGIVE ME FOR LOSING TOUCH WITH YOU

A FEW MONTHS AGO, YOU LEFT THE KOITO HOME IN ORDER TO WORK.
ALTHOUGH YOU WERE STRONGLY AGAINST IT, I COULDN'T QUENCH MY DESIRE TO CONTINUE TAKING CARE OF YOU.
SO I FINALLY DECIDED TO COME HERE IN THIS MANNER.
SO PLEASE, I BEG OF YOU
I BEG YOU TO FORGIVE YOUR NANNY.
...
D... DEARIE?
IT'S TRUE... YOU'RE FURIOUS THAT I CAME HERE WITHOUT NOTICE...
UH, NO
THAT'S NOT IT.
NO, NO, IT IS. THIS OLD LADY IS ENTIRELY AT FAULT.

NATSUYAKI HATOKO.
I WAS BORN IN THE 8TH SHOWA YEAR ON AUGUST 25. SO I'VE LIVED 79 FULL YEARS
I'M A HOUSEKEEPER BY OCCUPATION AND I AM CURRENTLY SERVING THE KOITO HOUSEHOLD.
ALSO ...
FUMI. YOU USED TO CALL ME "PEPPERMINT NANNY."

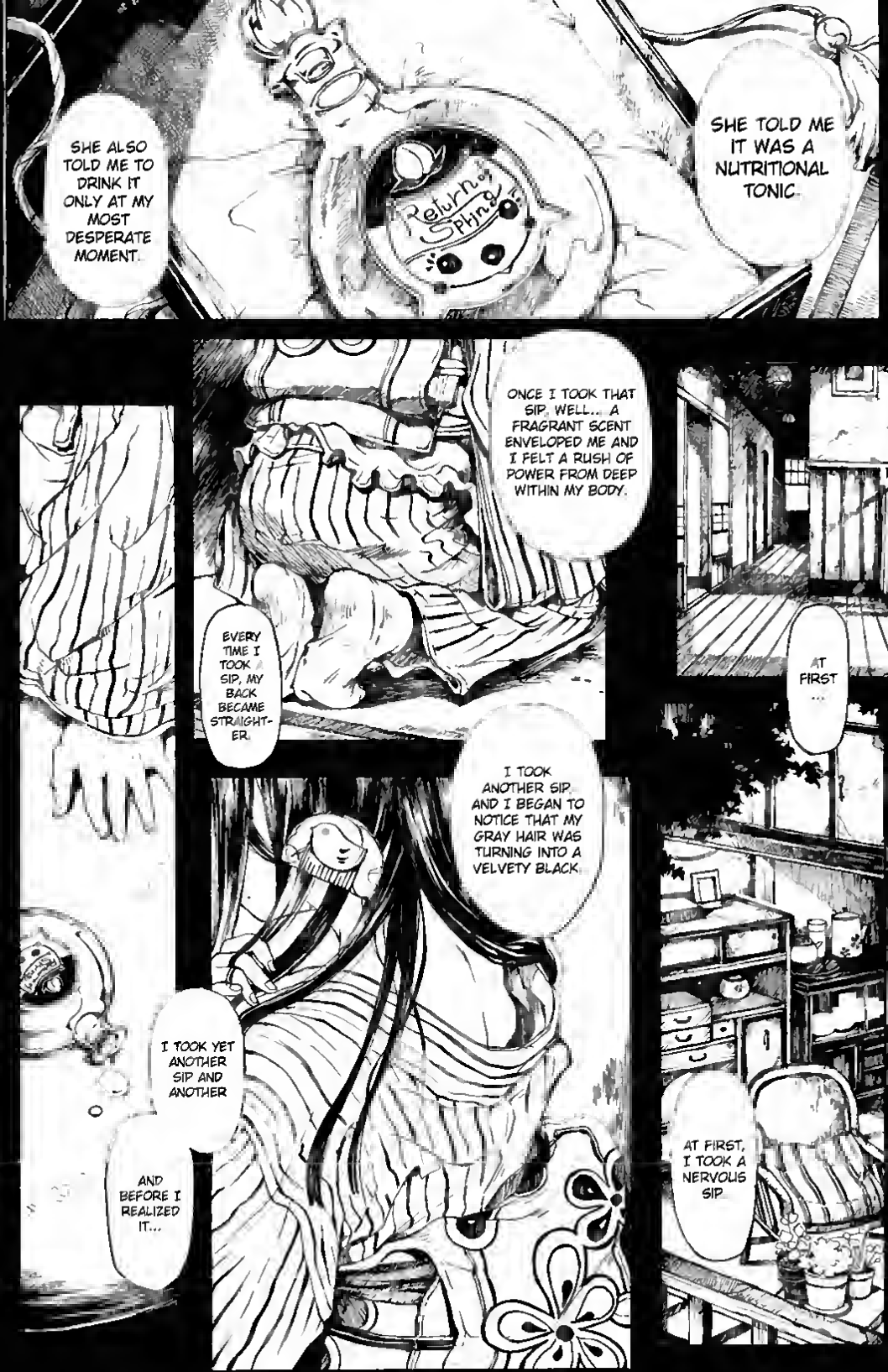
E... ELIXIR?
YES.
I DESPERATELY WANTED TO COME HERE TO TAKE CARE OF YOU, BUT MY ADVANCED AGE HAD MADE ME TOO WEAK.
THEN I REMEMBERED A CERTAIN BOTTLE MY MOTHER GAVE TO ME WHEN I FIRST STARTED WORKING AS A YOUNG GIRL.

AH! PEOPLE USED TO SAY THE MOLE NEAR MY MOUTH MAKES ME LOOK ATTRACTIVE, BUT I'VE NEVER CARED FOR IT.
ALSO, UM...
OKAY, LET'S BACK UP.


HUFF

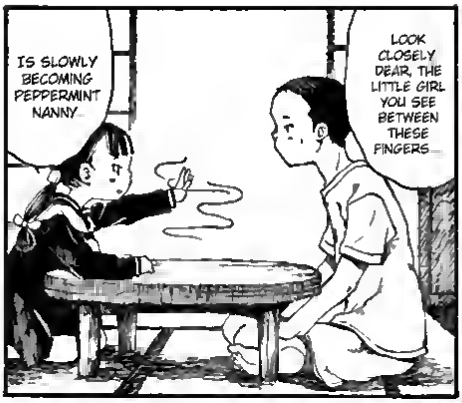
I MYSELF NEVER THOUGHT
THAT ELIXIR WOULD HAVE THIS EFFECT ON ME

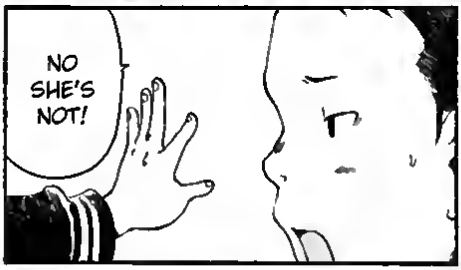
ASSUMING YOU ARE PEPPERMINT NANNY
CAN I ASK YOU WHY YOU LOOK LIKE A KID? LIKE A GIRL WHO'S SUPPOSED TO BE IN GRADE SCHOOL?

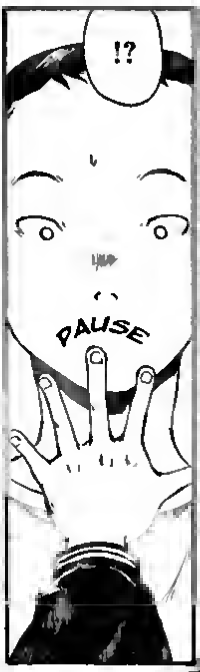

SHE TOLD ME IT WAS A NUTRITIONAL TONIC.
SHE ALSO TOLD ME TO DRINK IT ONLY AT MY MOST DESPERATE MOMENT.
ONCE I TOOK THAT SIP, WELL... A FRAGRANT SCENT ENVELOPED ME AND I FELT A RUSH OF POWER FROM DEEP WITHIN MY BODY.
EVERY TIME I TOOK A SIP, MY BACK BECAME STRAIGHTER.
AT FIRST...
I TOOK ANOTHER SIP AND I BEGAN TO NOTICE THAT MY GRAY HAIR WAS TURNING INTO A VELVETY BLACK.
I TOOK YET ANOTHER SIP AND ANOTHER
AND BEFORE I REALIZED IT...
AT FIRST, I TOOK A NERVOUS SIP.

WHEN I CHANCED A LOOK INTO THE MIRROR, THERE SAT A...

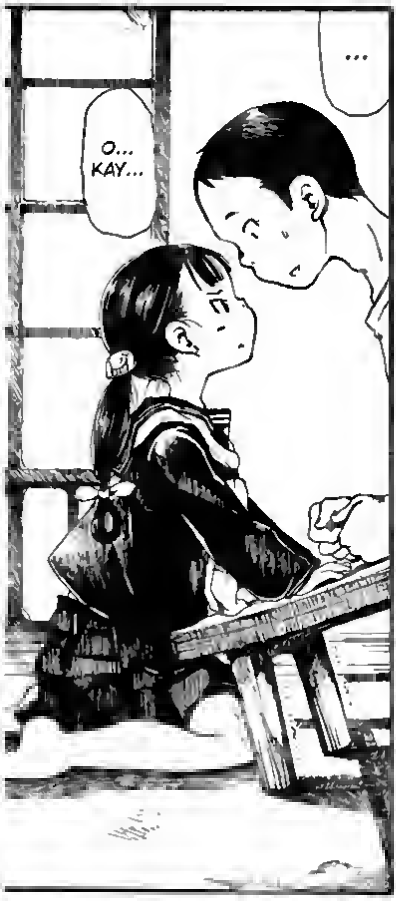
THIS COMB YOU GAVE ME FOR MY LAST BIRTHDAY.
I COULDN'T BEAR TO PART WITH MY TREASURE.
LOOK.
BUT, BUT I WANTED TO BECOME HEALTHY AGAIN SO THAT I CAN TAKE CARE OF YOU!
YOU WERE TOO GREEDY...
I COULDN'T FACE ANYBODY I KNEW LOOKING LIKE THIS.
THEY WOULDN'T BELIEVE MY STORY IF I TOLD THEM.
ONE OF THE FEW THINGS I COULD BRING WAS...
YOU SAID IT LOOKED LIKE SAKICHI, THE PET PARAKEET YOUR FAMILY KEEPS AT HOME.
YOU SEE THE EYE? ONE PART WAS PAINTED WRONGLY, SO THE BIRD LOOKS LIKE IT'S SQUINTING
HONEY.
IT WON'T CHANGE NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU LOOK AT IT
I SEE YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED THAT HABIT
WELL?


IS SLOWLY BECOMING PEPPERMINT NANNY...
LOOK CLOSELY DEAR, THE LITTLE GIRL YOU SEE BETWEEN THESE FINGERS...


NO SHE'S NOT!

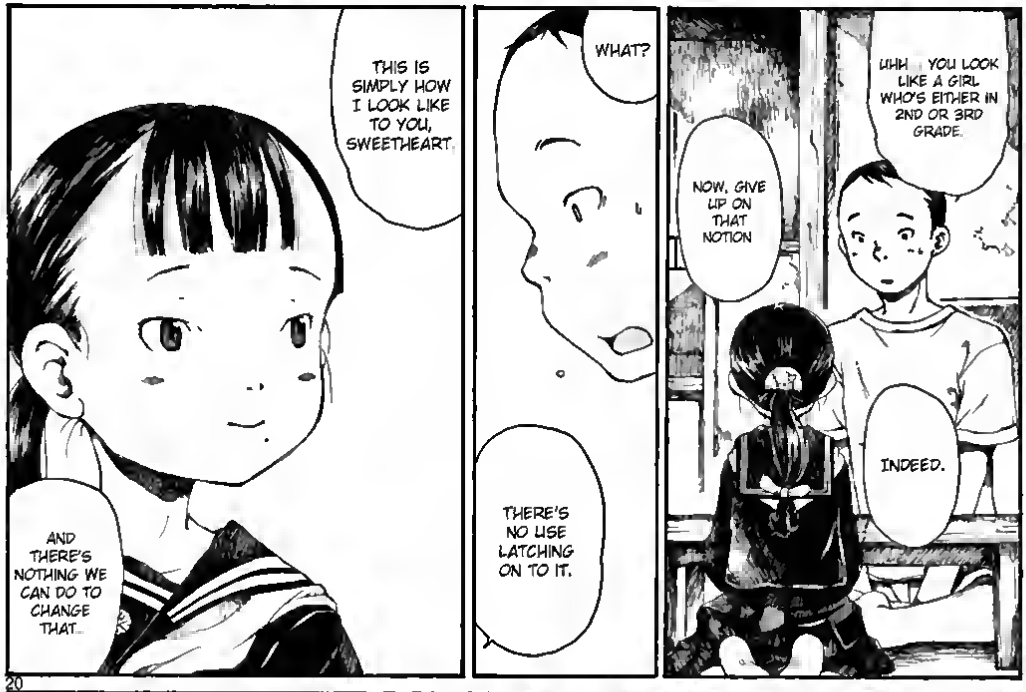

!?
PAUSE

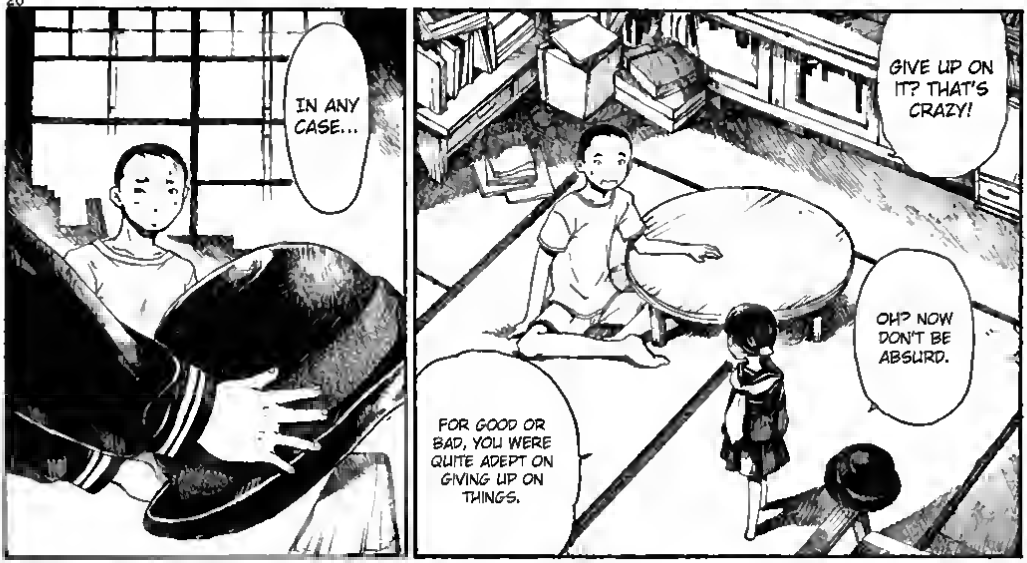
OKAY, MAYBE I DID GIVE THIS TO PEPPERMINT NANNY.
OF COURSE YOU DID.
BECAUSE I'M YOUR PEPPERMINT NANNY IN THE FLESH!


...
O... KAY...

YOUNG
MAN!!

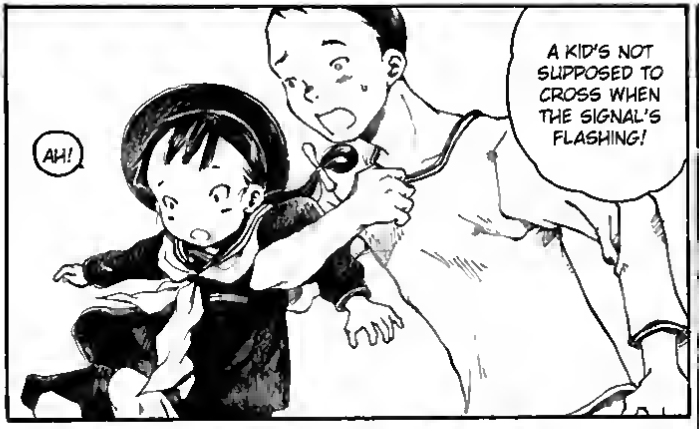
YOU DIDN'T BELIEVE A WORD I TOLD YOU... DID YOU?
UH, ACTUALLY, I
NO, THAT IS WHAT YOU FEEL IN YOUR HEART, BUT I WILL NOT BLAME YOU FOR IT.
NOW, WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE TO YOU, SWEETIE?


UHH... YOU LOOK LIKE A GIRL WHO'S EITHER IN 2ND OR 3RD GRADE.
NOW, GIVE UP ON THAT NOTION
INDEED.
WHAT?
THERE'S NO USE LATCHING ON TO IT.
THIS IS SIMPLY HOW I LOOK LIKE TO YOU, SWEETHEART.
AND THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO TO CHANGE THAT...


GIVE UP ON IT? THAT'S CRAZY!
OH? NOW DON'T BE ABSURD.
FOR GOOD OR BAD, YOU WERE QUITE ADEPT ON GIVING UP ON THINGS.
IN ANY CASE...

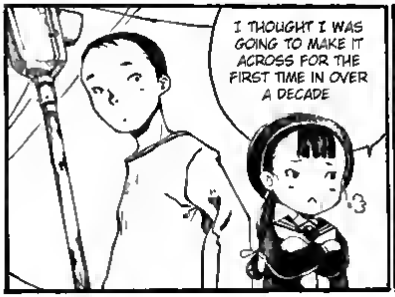
YOU MIGHT BE THE ONLY ONE WHO SEES ME AS A CHILD,
WHILE EVERYONE ELSE SEES ME AS A 79-YEAR-OLD WOMAN.
YOU
NEVER KNOW.
SO... THIS DISCUSSION IS OFFICIALLY CLOSED?
WE NEED TO BUY FOOD FOR DINNER. THERE'S HARDLY ANYTHING HERE WE CAN USE
EH?!
NOW THEN, LET'S STEP OUT.

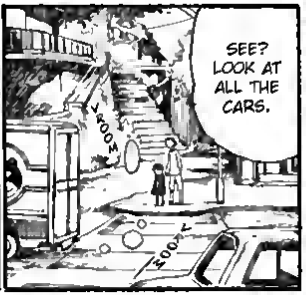
I'M SKIPPING WITHOUT ANY EFFORT!
I HAVE TO SAY, BEING YOUNG AGAIN MAKES ME FEEL AS LIGHT AS A FEATHER!
LOOK AT ME, DEAR!
TAP
TAP
DON'T WORRY
I CAN COOK, CLEAN, DO LAUNDRY AND PERFORM EVERY OTHER HOUSEHOLD CHORE WITHOUT ANY PROBLEMS.
I MAY LOOK LIKE A GIRL, BUT I'M STILL YOUR PEPPERMINT NANNY ON THE INSIDE.
NO NEED TO FRET.


AH!
A KID'S NOT SUPPOSED TO CROSS WHEN THE SIGNAL'S FLASHING!

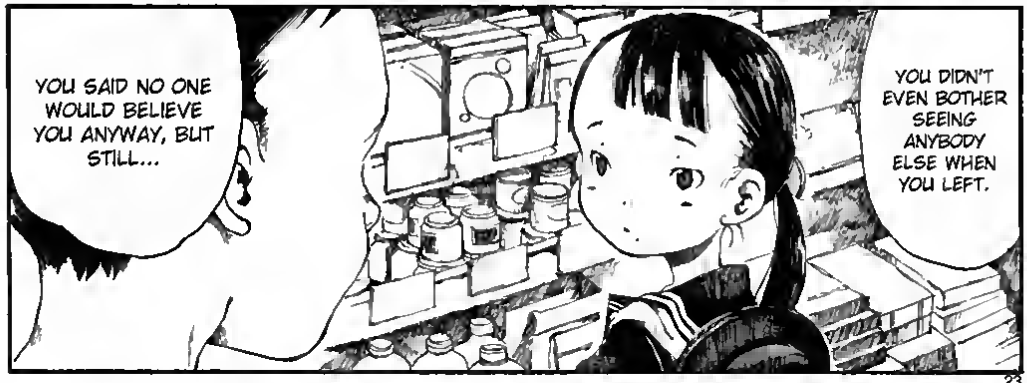
OH MY
FLASH FLASH

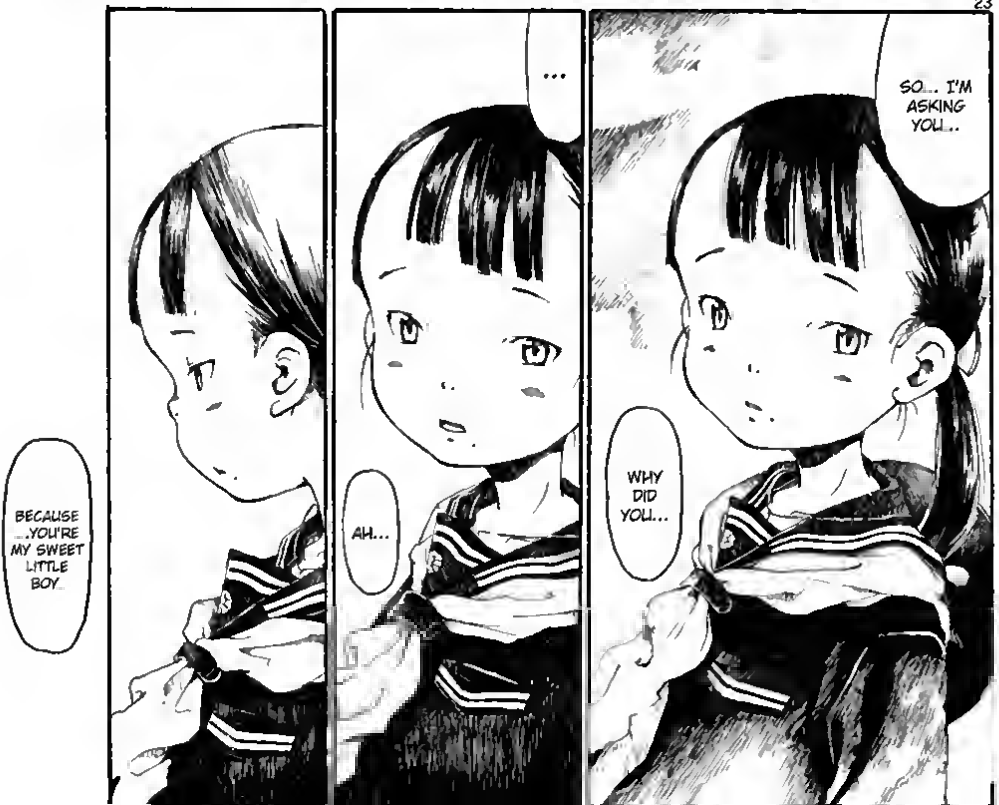
I'M NOT EVEN AFRAID OF A FLASHING SIGNAL!
HEY!


I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO MAKE IT ACROSS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OVER A DECADE


SEE? LOOK AT ALL THE CARS.
LOOK
LOOK

WHY COME TO MY PLACE ANYWAY?
YES?
SO, LIM, WHY...
CAN I ASK YOU SOME-THING?
SHE REALLY SAID SOMETHING AN OLD LADY WOULD SAY.


YOU SAID NO ONE WOULD BELIEVE YOU ANYWAY, BUT STILL...
YOU DIDN'T EVEN BOTHER SEEING ANYBODY ELSE WHEN YOU LEFT.

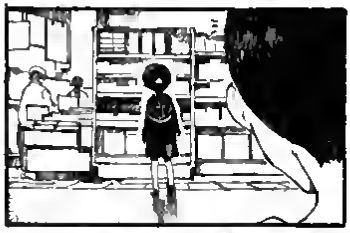

BECAUSE ...YOU'RE MY SWEET LITTLE BOY.
AH...
...
WHY DID YOU...
SO... I'M ASKING YOU...

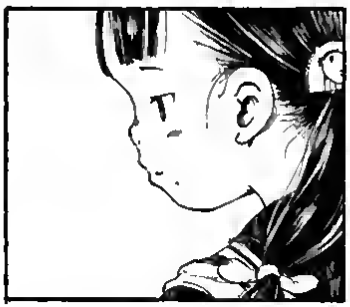
THERE IS NO OTHER REASON.

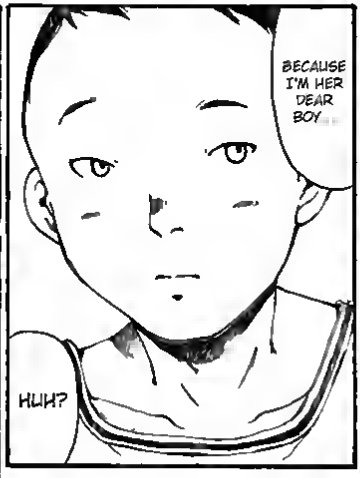
EH...
YOU'RE MY DEAR
BOY.
SALE
398

I'M ALSO GETTING SOME RICE AND VEGGIES WITH THE SOY SAUCE, SO I SUGGEST YOU GO AND GET A CART.
CLUNK
WHOA!

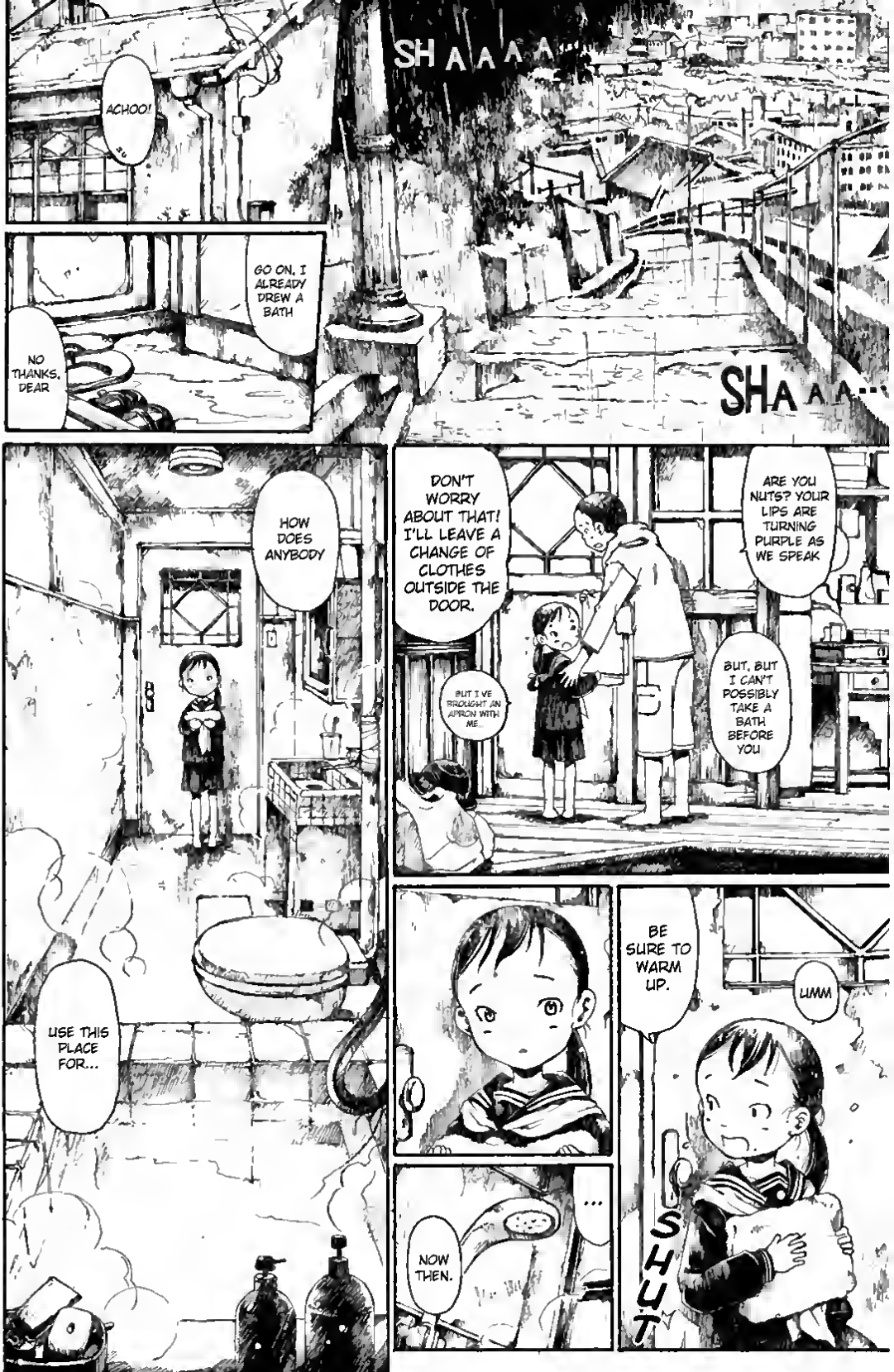
OOF...
TAP
TAH





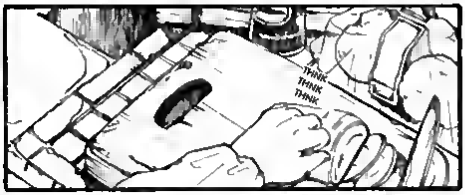

BECAUSE I'M HER DEAR BOY...
HUH?

ROLL ROLL
I DON'T THINK THIS IS WHERE THEY SELL RICE.
SAKURA DROPS
SO WHAT WAS SHE LOOKING AT?
AH!
GOODNESS GRACIOUS, I'M BACK WHERE I STARTED!
SAKURA DROPS
HUH? DIDN'T I USED TO...
UHH...
MY WORD! WHAT SORT OF MEALS HAVE YOU BEEN EATING?
NAH, I NEVER BUY ANY RICE.
I GET MY FOOD IN MINI MARTS
I WASN'T ABLE TO FIND ANY.
DO YOU KNOW?
UH, SWEET-HEART...
SO, UH, WHAT ABOUT THE RICE?
EH?
RUMBLE RUMBLE
FLIP
FLIP
RATTLE


ACHOO!
SHAAAA
GO ON. I ALREADY DREW A BATH
NO THANKS, DEAR
SHAAA
HOW DOES ANYBODY
USE THIS PLACE FOR...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT! I'LL LEAVE A CHANGE OF CLOTHES OUTSIDE THE DOOR.
ARE YOU NUTS? YOUR LIPS ARE TURNING PURPLE AS WE SPEAK
BUT I'VE BROUGHT AN APRON WITH ME...
BUT, BUT I CAN'T POSSIBLY TAKE A BATH BEFORE YOU
BE SURE TO WARM UP.
UMM
SHUT
...
NOW THEN.

PSHAAA

YOW!

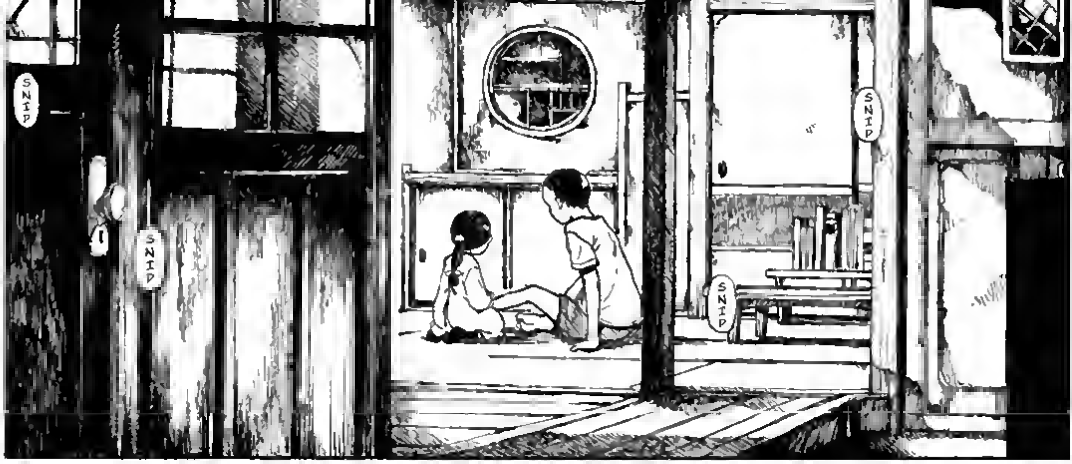

THINK
THINK
THINK

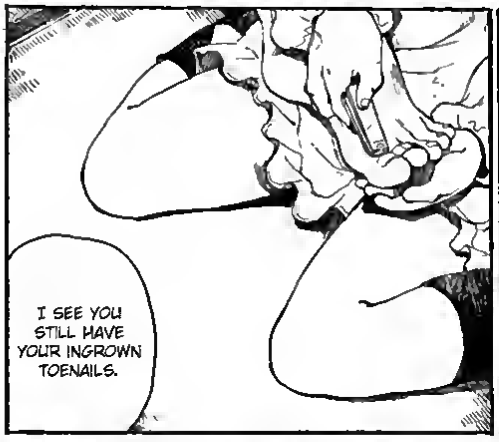
THE BANDAGES SHOULD BE AROUND HERE

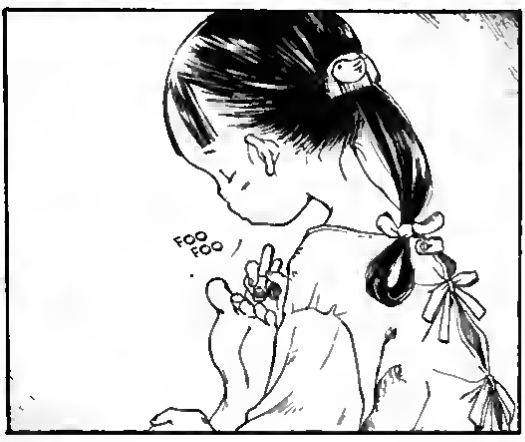
BUBBLE

I FOUND THEM KNOCKED OVER AND WILTING IN THE CORNER OF THE LAWN.
DON'T BE SILLY.
DID YOU BUY THESE FLOWERS TOO?
DINNER WILL BE READY IN A MINUTE.
THEY WILL BLOOM EVEN PRETTIER ONCE I GIVE THEM MORE OF THE OLD GREEN THUMB.
OH YEAH, THOSE WERE SOME EXTRA DECORATIVE FLOWERS AT MY WORKPLACE, WHICH WERE FOISTED ON ME DURING MY WELCOMING PARTY.
PLIP
PLIP
I THOUGHT IT WAS SUCH A SHAME SEEING THEM LIKE THAT.
PLIP
SHAAA
I GAVE THEM PLENTY OF WATER IN THE MORNING, AND NOW THEY'VE SPRUNG BACK TO LIFE.
OH YEAH, BACK AT MY OLD HOME..
WOW, THEY LOOK SO NICE...

I'M AFRAID THEY DON'T GIVE OFF MUCH OF A SCENT, DEAR.
...
HUH...
PAT PAT
EH? DID YOU SAY SOME-THING?
UH, I SAID THE RAIN-DROPS ARE DRIVING ME CRAZY...
OW! ALMOST FORGOT
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE SEEN FLOWERS INSIDE A HOME...
...
EH?
NOW THEN...
I'LL GO AHEAD AND CLIP YOUR TOENAILS TOO.
PAT PAT
C'- COME ON, I CAN DO THIS MYSELF...
YOU STILL CUT TOO DEEPLY EVEN AS A GROWN MAN...
YES, I'M SURE NOW SIT STILL.
NOW HONESTLY ...
PEEL

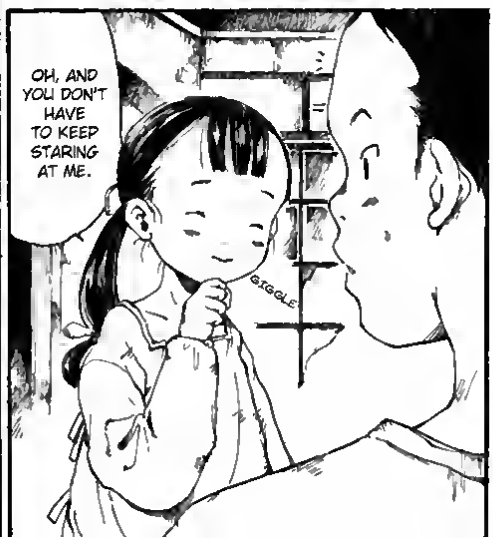

SNIP
SNIP
SNIP
SNIP


I SEE YOU STILL HAVE YOUR INGROWN TOENAILS.


FOO FOO

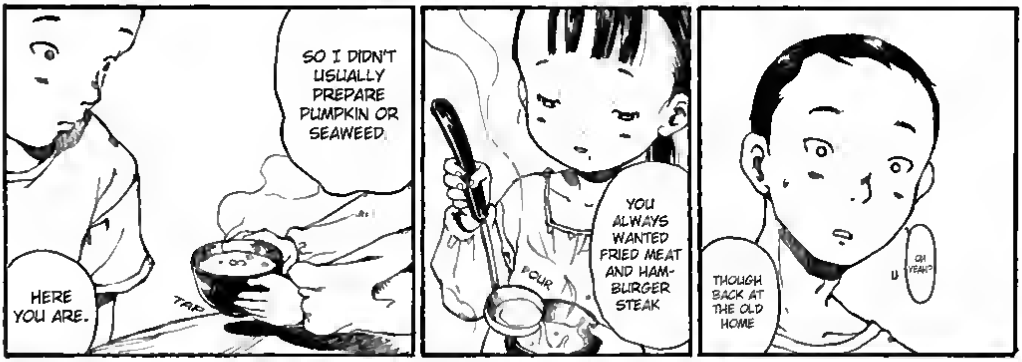
I'M USED TO DOING THIS FOR YOU.

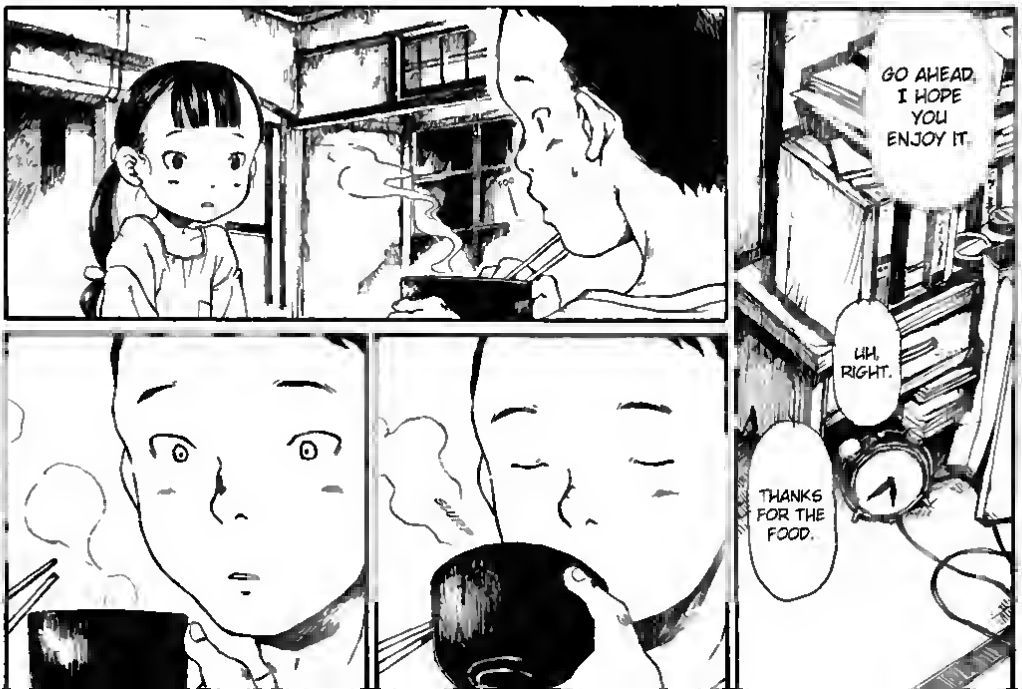
I ALWAYS HAD TROUBLE DEALING WITH THOSE BUGGERS.
SNIP

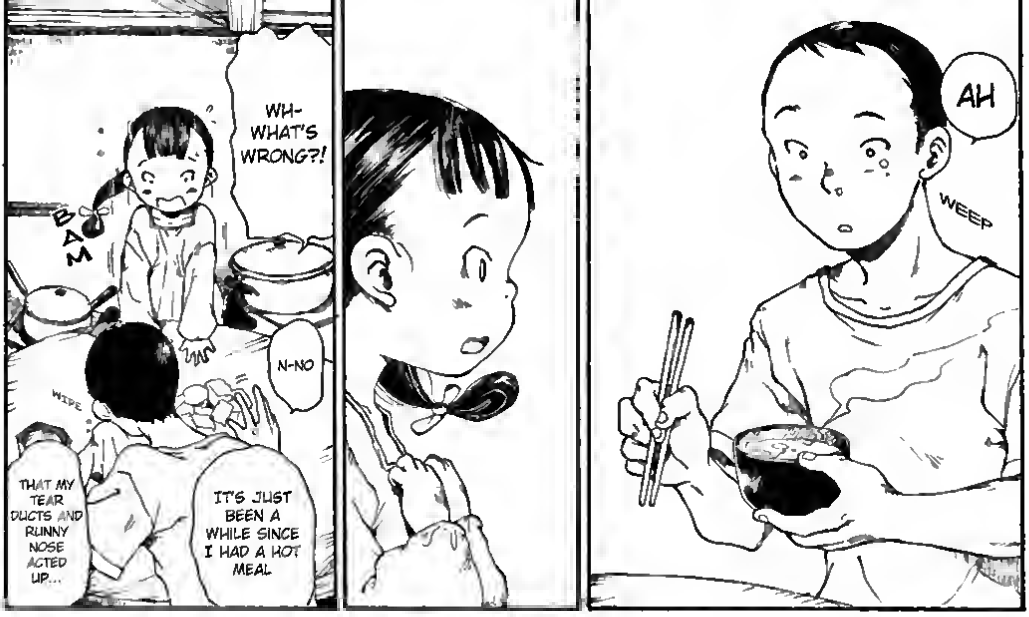

OH, AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO KEEP STARING AT ME.
GIGGLE

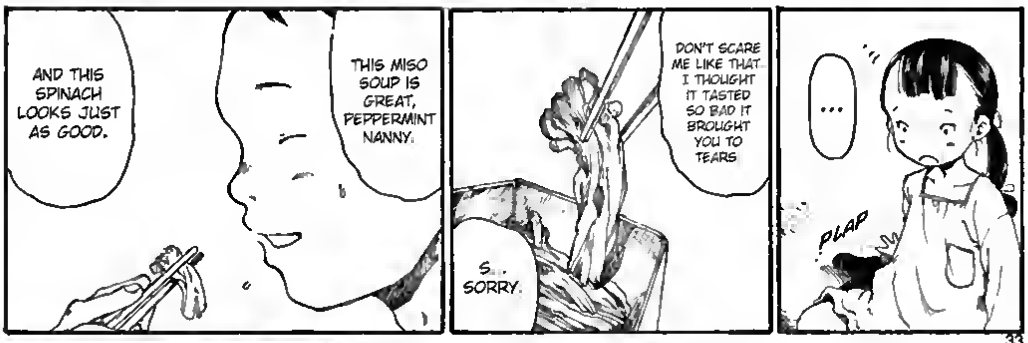
ALTHOUGH I NEVER ONCE CLIPPED THEM LIKE I'M DOING RIGHT NOW.
CLIP
I DO HAVE A FONDNESS FOR INGROWN TOENAILS.
STILL
A NEIGHBORHOOD BOY I LIKED AS A KID HAD THEM TOO.
AH!
FLICKER
TH... THANKS
THERE, YOU'RE ALL SET.
DARN IT, I HAVE TO CHECK THE FOOD!
PAT
PAT
IT'S BEEN AGES SINCE I COOKED RICE WITH A POT.
CLACK
YOU DIDN'T EVEN BOTHER PURCHASING A RICE COOKER.
THANK GOODNESS THE UTENSILS ARE THE ONES YOU TOOK FROM THE OLD HOME

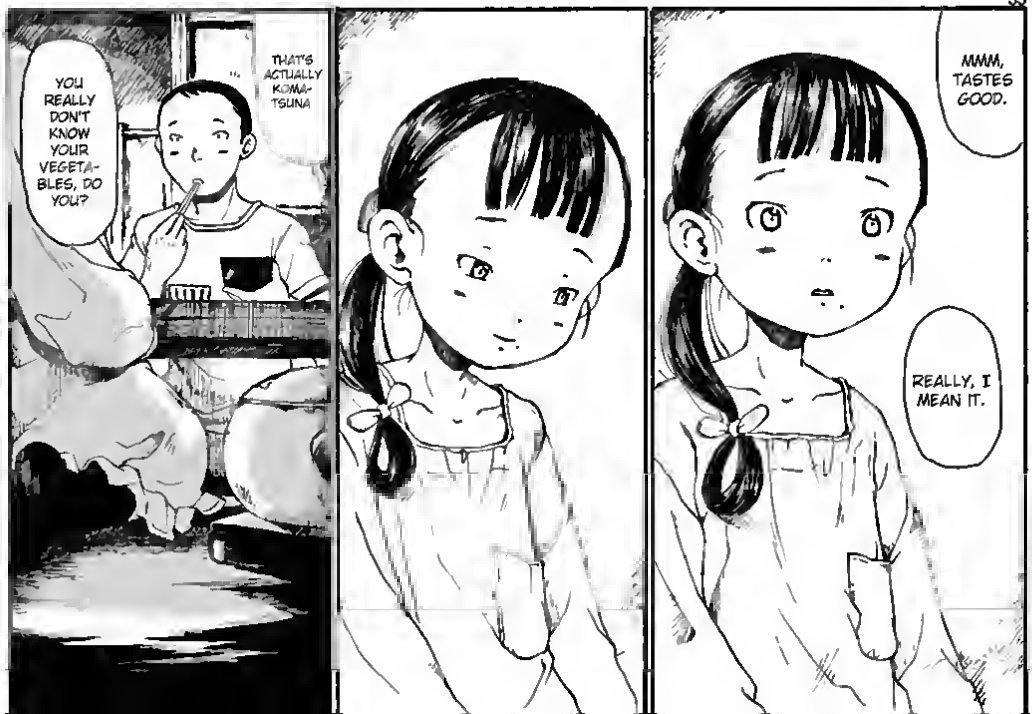
D... DID YOU MAKE ALL THIS?
THAT I DID.
I... DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY...
GROWWWL
THEY'RE THE SAME THINGS I USED TO MAKE AT THE OLD HOME
THANK HEAVEN THEY WERE ABLE TO COOK WELL.

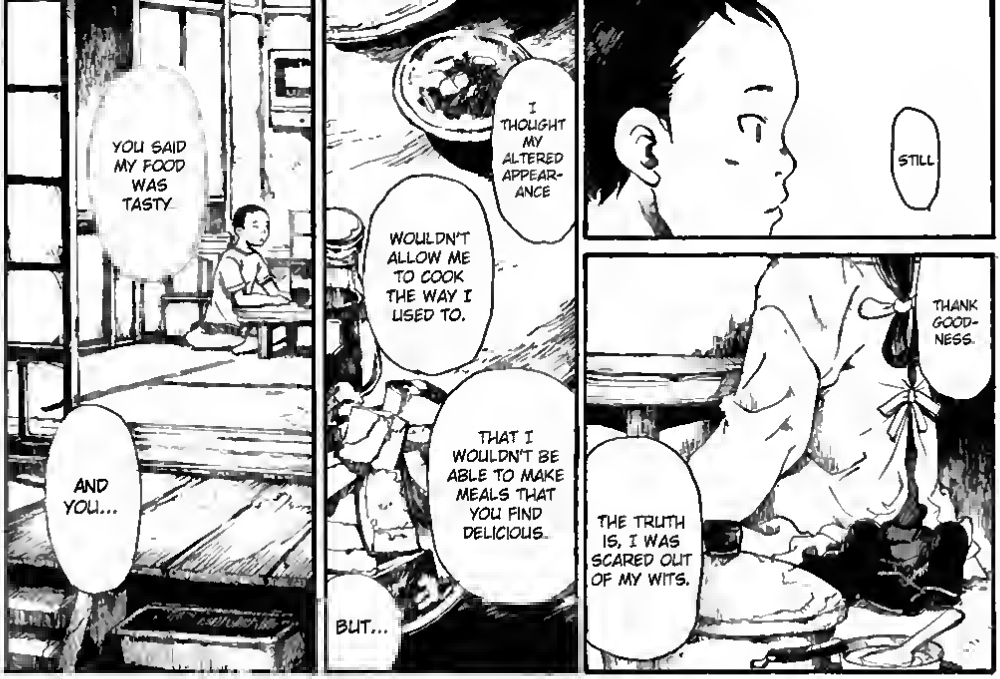

SO I DIDN'T USUALLY PREPARE PUMPKIN OR SEAWEED.
HERE YOU ARE.
TAP
YOU ALWAYS WANTED FRIED MEAT AND HAMBURGER STEAK
POUR
THOUGH BACK AT THE OLD HOME
OH YEAH


GO AHEAD. I HOPE YOU ENJOY IT.
UH. RIGHT.
THANKS FOR THE FOOD.
SLURP

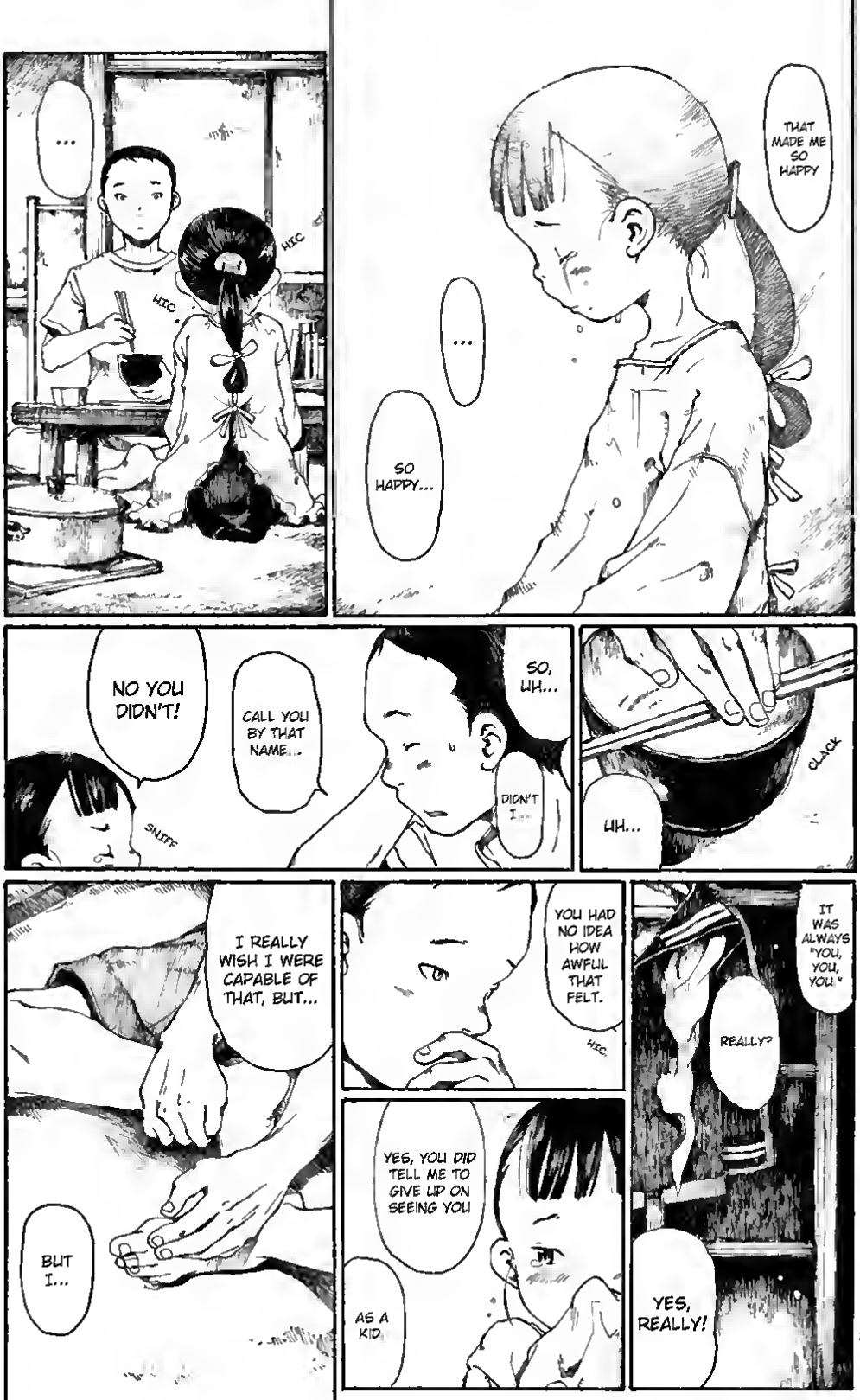

WH-WHAT'S WRONG?!
BAM
N-NO
WIPE
THAT MY TEAR DUCTS AND RUNNY NOSE ACTED UP...
IT'S JUST BEEN A WHILE SINCE I HAD A HOT MEAL
AH
WEEP

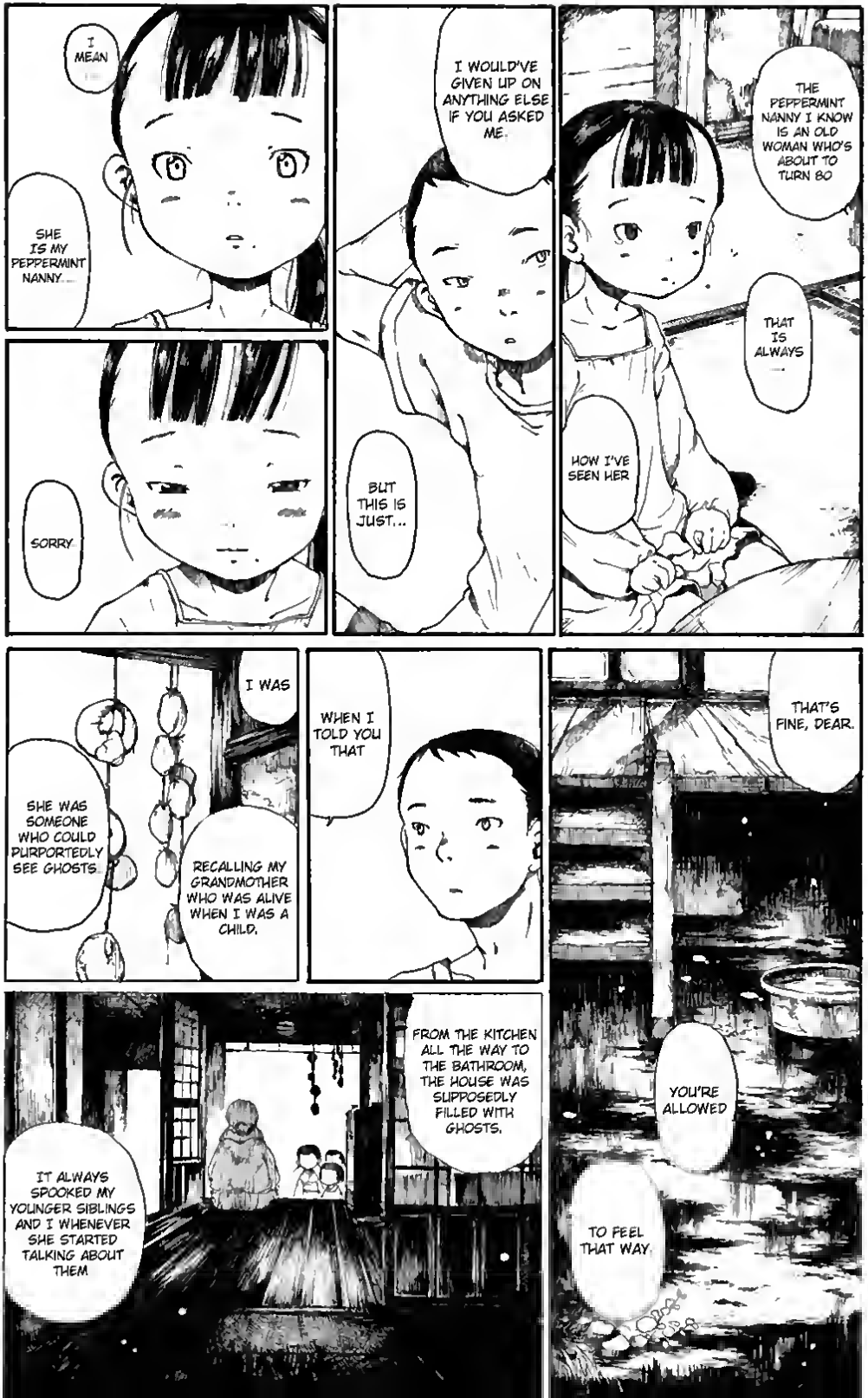

AND THIS SPINACH LOOKS JUST AS GOOD.
THIS MISO SOUP IS GREAT, PEPPERMINT NANNY.
S... SORRY.
DON'T SCARE ME LIKE THAT. I THOUGHT IT TASTED SO BAD IT BROUGHT YOU TO TEARS
...
PLAP

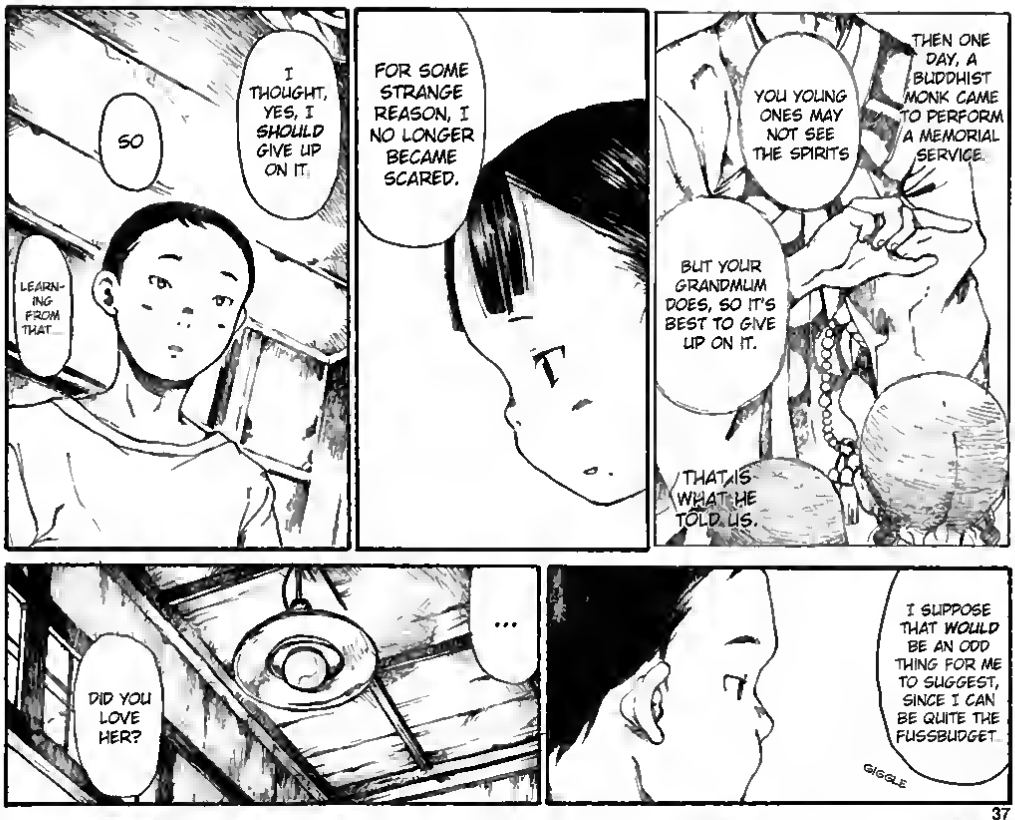

YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW YOUR VEGETABLES, DO YOU?
... THAT'S ACTUALLY KOMATSUNA
MMM, TASTES GOOD.
REALLY, I MEAN IT.


YOU SAID MY FOOD WAS TASTY.
AND YOU...
I THOUGHT MY ALTERED APPEAR-ANCE
WOULDN'T ALLOW ME TO COOK THE WAY I USED TO.
THAT I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO MAKE MEALS THAT YOU FIND DELICIOUS.
BUT...
STILL
THANK GOOD-NESS.
THE TRUTH IS, I WAS SCARED OUT OF MY WITS.

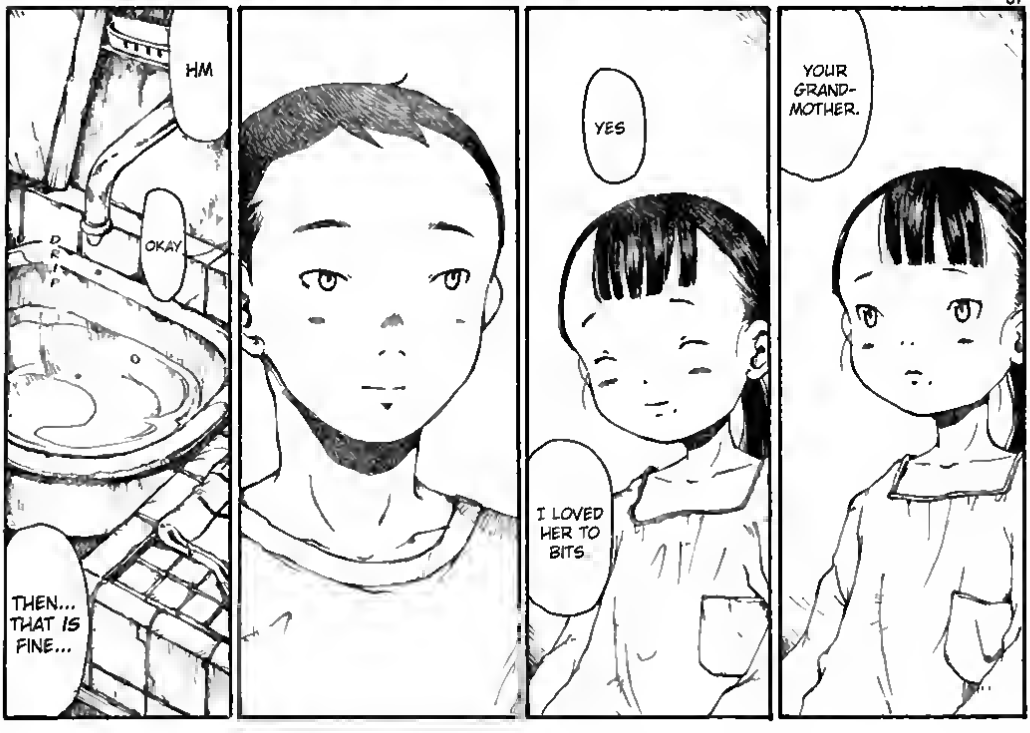
CALLED ME "PEPPER-MINT NANNY"
YOU'VE MADE ME SO HAPPY.
FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE WE'VE REUNITED.
MY DEAREST

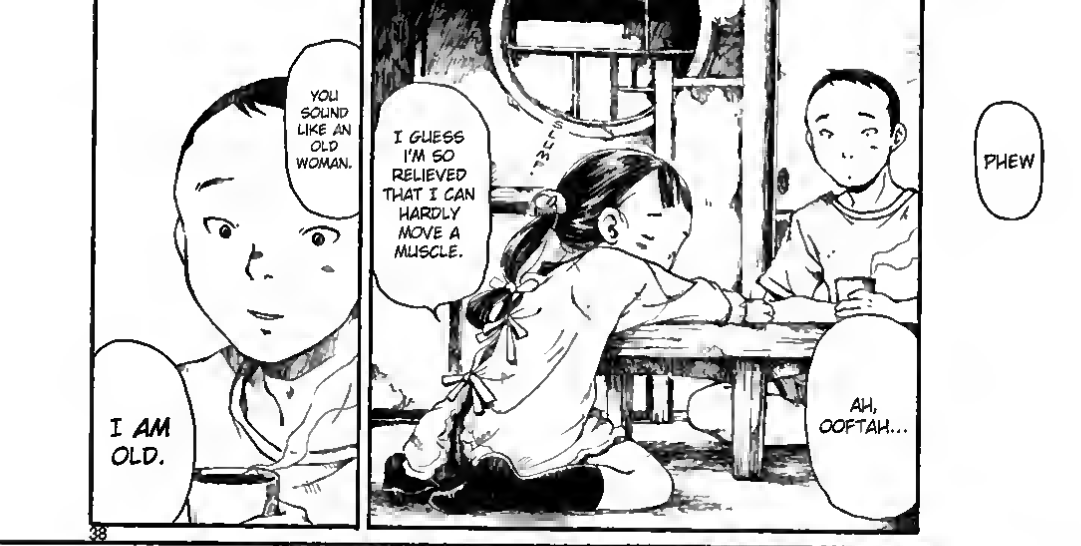

...
HIC
HIC
THAT MADE ME SO HAPPY
...
SO HAPPY...
NO YOU DIDN'T!
SNIFF
CALL YOU BY THAT NAME...
SO, UH...
DIDN'T I...
CLACK
UH...
I REALLY WISH I WERE CAPABLE OF THAT, BUT...
BUT I...
YOU HAD NO IDEA HOW AWFUL THAT FELT.
HIC
YES, YOU DID TELL ME TO GIVE UP ON SEEING YOU
AS A KID
IT WAS ALWAYS "YOU, YOU, YOU."
REALLY?
YES, REALLY!

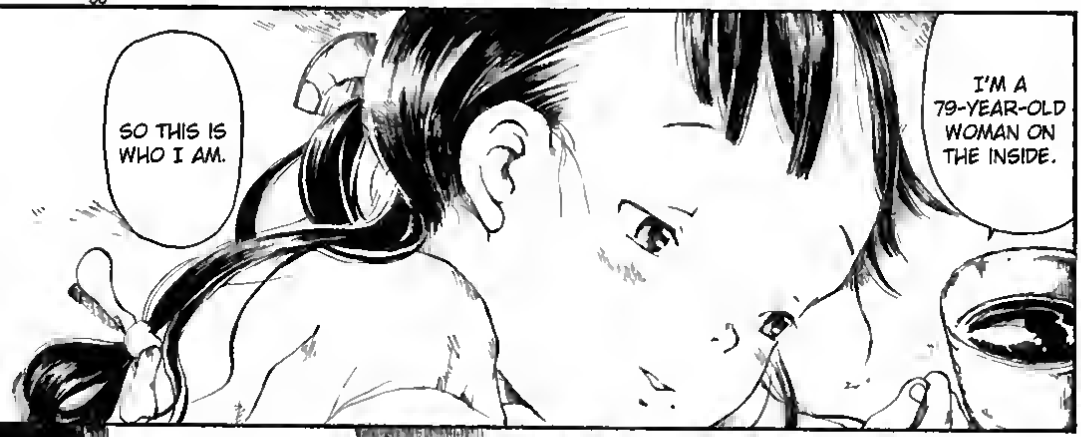

I MEAN
SHE IS MY PEPPERMINT NANNY.
SORRY.
I WOULD'VE GIVEN UP ON ANYTHING ELSE IF YOU ASKED ME.
BUT THIS IS JUST...
THE PEPPERMINT NANNY I KNOW IS AN OLD WOMAN WHO'S ABOUT TO TURN 80
THAT IS ALWAYS
HOW I'VE SEEN HER
I WAS
SHE WAS SOMEONE WHO COULD PURPORTEDLY SEE GHOSTS.
RECALLING MY GRANDMOTHER WHO WAS ALIVE WHEN I WAS A CHILD.
WHEN I TOLD YOU THAT
FROM THE KITCHEN ALL THE WAY TO THE BATHROOM, THE HOUSE WAS SUPPOSEDLY FILLED WITH GHOSTS.
IT ALWAYS SPOOKED MY YOUNGER SIBLINGS AND I WHENEVER SHE STARTED TALKING ABOUT THEM
THAT'S FINE, DEAR.
YOU'RE ALLOWED
TO FEEL THAT WAY.

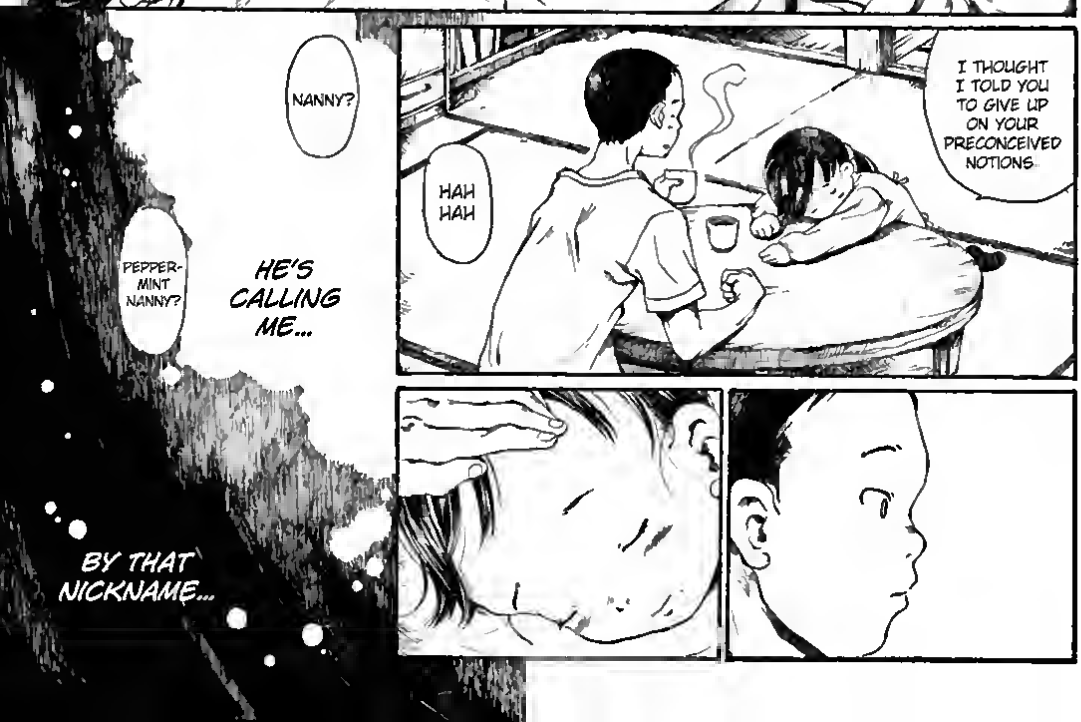

SO
I THOUGHT, YES, I SHOULD GIVE UP ON IT.
LEARNING FROM THAT...
FOR SOME STRANGE REASON, I NO LONGER BECAME SCARED.
YOU YOUNG ONES MAY NOT SEE THE SPIRITS
THEN ONE DAY, A BUDDHIST MONK CAME TO PERFORM A MEMORIAL SERVICE.
BUT YOUR GRANDMUM DOES, SO IT'S BEST TO GIVE UP ON IT.
THAT IS WHAT HE TOLD US.
...
DID YOU LOVE HER?
I SUPPOSE THAT WOULD BE AN ODD THING FOR ME TO SUGGEST, SINCE I CAN BE QUITE THE FUSSBUDGET.
GIGGLE

37

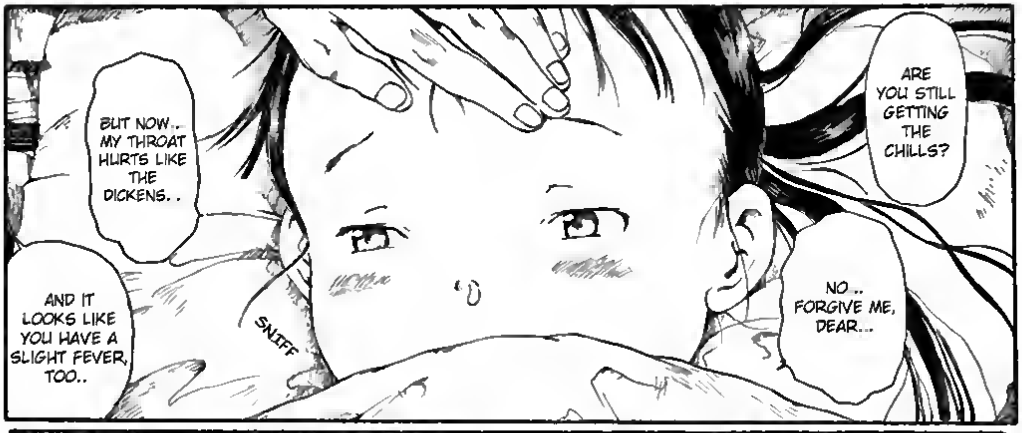

HM
OKAY
DRIP
THEN... THAT IS FINE...
YES
I LOVED HER TO BITS.
YOUR GRAND-MOTHER.


YOU SOUND LIKE AN OLD WOMAN.
I GUESS I'M SO RELIEVED THAT I CAN HARDLY MOVE A MUSCLE.
PHEW
I AM OLD.
AH, OOFTAH...

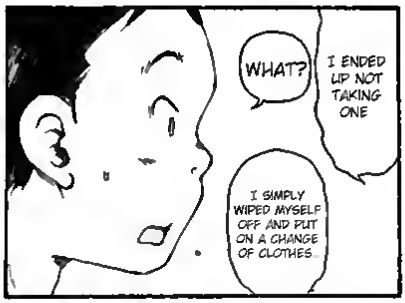

SO THIS IS WHO I AM.
I'M A 79-YEAR-OLD WOMAN ON THE INSIDE.

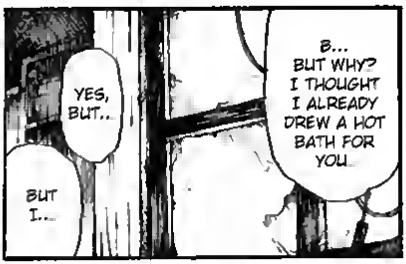

NANNY?
I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO GIVE UP ON YOUR PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS.
HAH HAH
PEPPER-MINT NANNY?
HE'S CALLING ME...
BY THAT NICKNAME...

THE ONE I LOVE THE MOST.

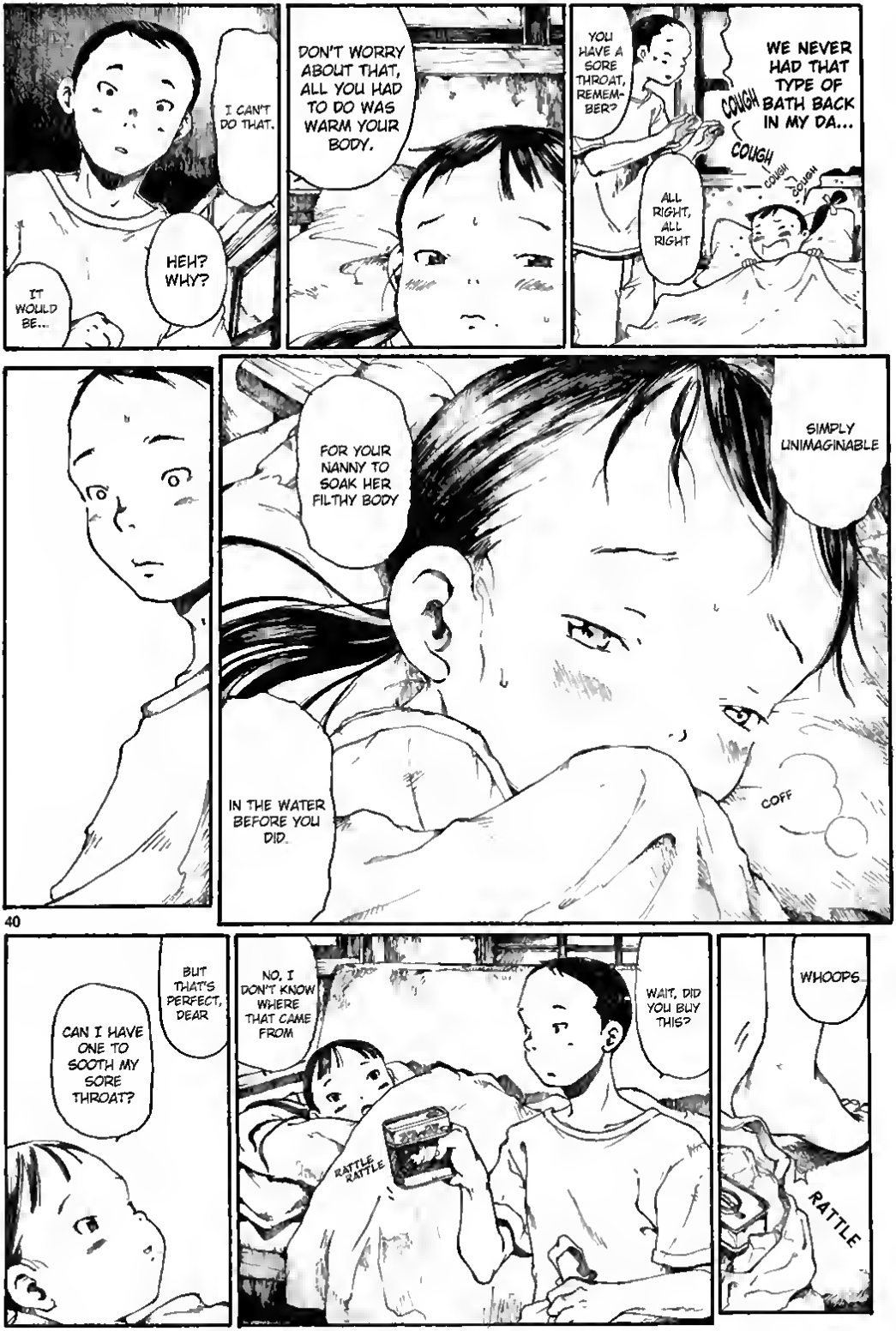

ARE YOU STILL GETTING THE CHILLS?
NO.. FORGIVE ME, DEAR...
BUT NOW.. MY THROAT HURTS LIKE THE DICKENS..
SNIFF
AND IT LOOKS LIKE YOU HAVE A SLIGHT FEVER, TOO..

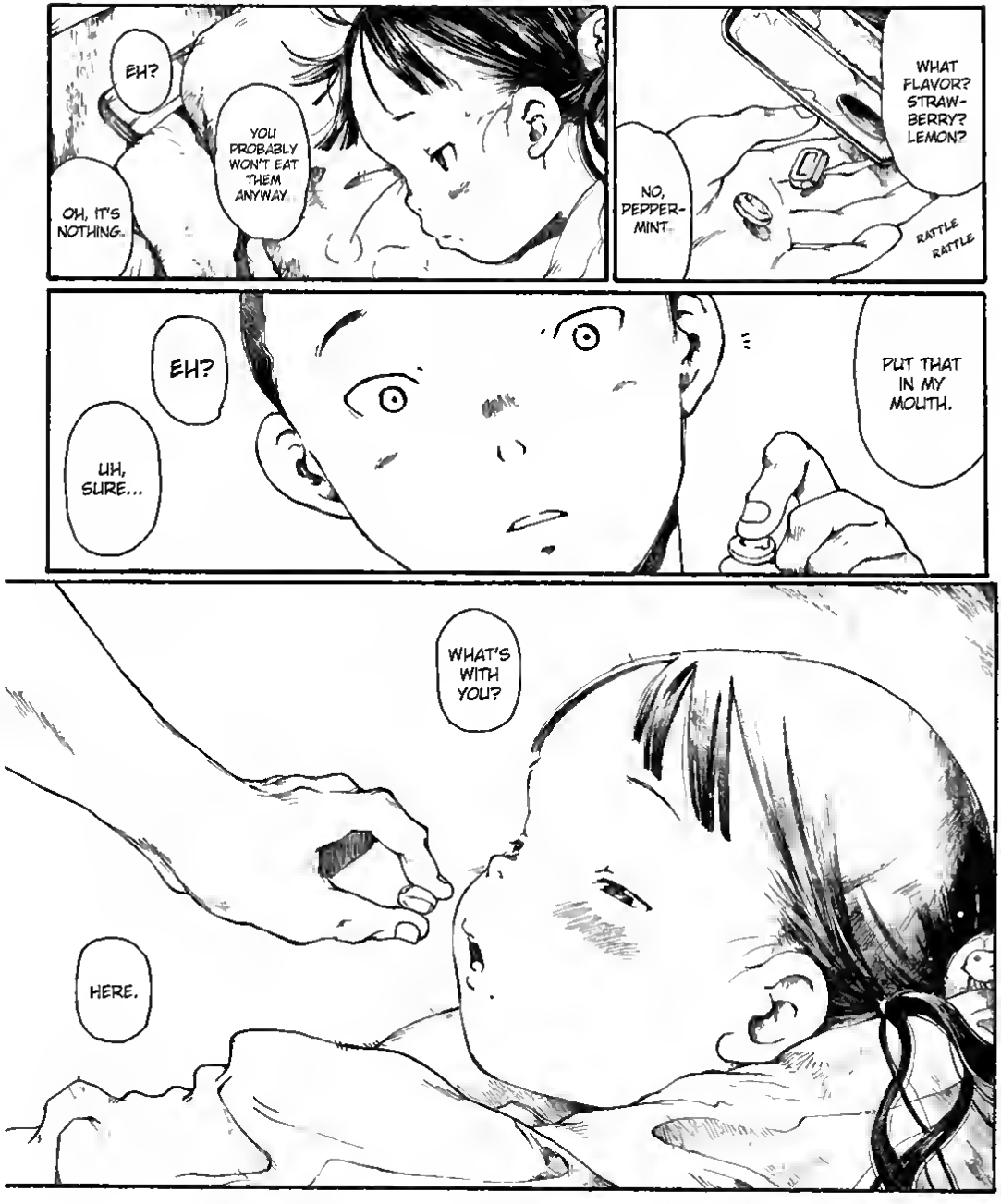
I GUESS YOU DO HAVE A COLD. YOU WORE YOURSELF OUT THE WHOLE DAY, AND YOU GOT DRENCHED BY THAT EVENING SHOWER TO BOOT.
DIDN'T YOU WARM YOURSELF UP WITH THAT BATH?
AHH, YES ACTUALLY...





*IN JAPAN, YOU TYPICALLY WASH YOUR BODY BEFORE SOAKING IN THE TUB.


I CAN'T DO THAT.
HEH? WHY?
IT WOULD BE...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT, ALL YOU HAD TO DO WAS WARM YOUR BODY.
YOU HAVE A SORE THROAT, REMEMBER?
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT
WE NEVER HAD THAT TYPE OF BATH BACK IN MY DA...
COUGH
COUGH
COUGH
FOR YOUR NANNY TO SOAK HER FILTHY BODY
SIMPLY UNIMAGINABLE
IN THE WATER BEFORE YOU DID.
COFF
40
BUT THAT'S PERFECT, DEAR
CAN I HAVE ONE TO SOOTH MY SORE THROAT?
NO, I DON'T KNOW WHERE THAT CAME FROM
WAIT, DID YOU BUY THIS?
RATTLE RATTLE
WHOOPS
RATTLE

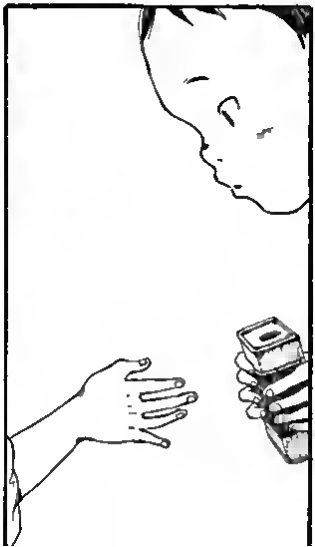

EH?
YOU PROBABLY WON'T EAT THEM ANYWAY.
OH, IT'S NOTHING.
WHAT FLAVOR? STRAW-BERRY? LEMON?
NO, PEPPER-MINT.
RATTLE RATTLE
EH?
UH, SURE...
PUT THAT IN MY MOUTH.
WHAT'S WITH YOU?
HERE.

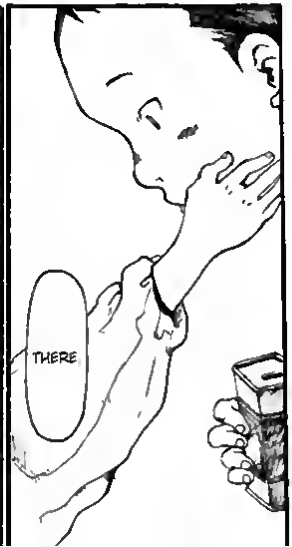
HMM?

HONEY

F
OOO

MM-
HMM ..




THERE

SO YOU BLEW INTO MY NOSE
PEPPERMINT NANNY.
WHY?
BUT OTHERS WILL THINK IT'S STRANGE IF THEY HEAR IT.
I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU LIKED THAT NAME.
ACTUALLY, LOVE
I BELIEVE IT'S TIME TO PUT THAT NICKNAME TO BED
DROPS
THEN...
WHAT *SHOULD* I CALL YOU?

44
WHAT INDEED...

HOW LONG ARE YOU PLANNING TO SLEEP?!
UH, AHH... SO WHAT SHOULD I CALL YOU...?
THAT'S ENOUGH OF YOUR MUMBLING, DEAR.
GET UP, OR ELSE YOU'LL BE LATE FOR WORK.
STOP HOLDING ON TO THAT TIN OF CANDY DROPS.
YOU NEED TO GET READY!
YOU'RE TALKING TO A PROUD YAMATO NADESHIKO WHO SURVIVED THE PACIFIC WAR!
NOW I CAN'T HAVE YOU DOUBTING MY PHYSICAL STAMINA.
AH...
ARE YOU FEELING BETTER?

THAT'D MAKE US BOTH LOOK WEIRD TO OTHERS.
OH?
I-LOOK, WOULD YOU PLEASE NOT CALL ME THAT OUT HERE.
I NEARLY FORGOT TO GIVE YOU YOUR LUNCH!
UH, THANKS ...
AH, ALMOST FORGOT!
HONEEEEY~
JOLT
47
IS... THAT RIGHT?
OF COURSE IT IS.
NOW GIVE UP THAT NOTION.
BUT YOU ARE ALWAYS GOING TO BE MY DEAR, SWEET BOY, NO MATTER WHAT.
SO WHY WOULDN'T I CALL YOU "HONEY"?
!
AH, SHOOT, LOOK AT THE TIME!
TAP
OKAY, I'LL SEE YOU PEPPERMINT NA...

"NANNY" DOESN'T SIT RIGHT WITH ME, NOW THAT I'VE REGAINED MY YOUTH.
AND BESIDES
OR ELSE OTHERS MIGHT GET STRANGE IDEAS ABOUT US.
JUST CALL ME "PEPPER-MINT."
PEPPERMINT.
I'LL SEE YOU LATER

CHAPTER ONE: PEPPERMINT GIRL / END
FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE FEBRUARY 2013 ISSUE OF MONTHLY IKKI